

A N
IMITATION
OF THE
New Way of WRITING,
Introduc'd by the
Learned Mr. *Asgill*.
Humbly Offer'd to his
ADMIRERS.

Pila minantia Pilis. Lucan.

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THE PREFACE.

LIFE, short as it is, would be very tedious without Variety. Upon which Account in all Ages, those Persons that have been so happy as to help the World to any Ingenious and Useful Invention, have, generally speaking, receiv'd as a just Reward, a very distinguishing Share of Esteem and Reputation. And 'tis undoubtedly a Tribute due from the Publick to their Merit, whose happy Genius enables them to be of such singular Service to Mankind. Next to Invention may be reckon'd the Perfecting of something valuable, which was found out before. Mr. Asgill, in my Opinion, which I humbly submit to the Judgment of the

A 2 Reader,

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Reader, has eminently deserv'd upon that Account. For tho' the Art of Ridicule was known even to the Ancients, and has been employ'd in several Generations with very great Success against Good Manners and Religion; yet there was this wanting in it, that it could not be made use of but by a Man of Parts. This Gentleman has made it so plain, that a Man of a very indifferent Capacity (and the less Learning so much the better) may, when he is once let into the Secret, with the greatest Ease imaginable, practise it upon a great many Subjects and Persons; and if he has but the Sleight of dexterously turning his Conscience and Common Sense the wrong Side outward, he may do it upon all. The Business is this: Connection I take to be the Great Rock, upon which all the celebrated Ancients, which have so long impos'd upon the World (tho' we begin to be a little Wiser now) were split. And must be as carefully avoided in this way of Writing as the Pestilence; for it cuts the Throat at once of all the Design. This single Precept duly taken care of, the rest will follow by Degrees. For if you do but now and then ask a Pert Question, by way of Surprise,

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prize, and follow it up close with Another ; Then stitch up all Together at the Bottom with a Sentence in the Habit of an Aphorism, (and if you can conveniently, let that Line be shorter than the rest) you have the Secret, as sure as ever Van Helmont had the Philosopher's Stone.

There are several other Modes of Speech, which will be great Embellishments in their proper Places, if they be made use of by way of Conundrum. Now you are to understand, that no Rules are to be imitated in such a servile Manner, as if a Man might not Deviate from them upon proper Occasions, provided he has a Genius. You would think that Poet strangely employ'd whom you should find Counting the Lines of Virgil ; and give this Reason for it, That he Design'd to write an Heroick Poem. Rules are intended only for Beginners, and are suppos'd to be reduc'd into a Habit by Masters. But Horace, who is reported to have been a Considerable Judge, is said to have been of Opinion, that People that had no Capacity could not so easily judge what was Right, and what Amiss, as those that had——

Such

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Such People ought never to venture out of the sight of Shore : But if they have Conduct enough, to keep close to the Rules that I have laid down ; tho' they may not attain (for that you know depends upon Every man's Capacity and Application) to the utmost Degree of Perfection ; Yet they will most Certainly, in a shorter Time than can reasonably be expected, find that I have not impos'd upon them, and make a very Commendable Progress.

Besides, there is this peculiar Advantage in this way of Writing ; That whereas all those Authors which propos'd to themselves to Write methodically, according to the Old-fashion'd way, were oblig'd, after they had proposed any Subject and rais'd the Expectation of the Reader ; To maintain the Point they had undertaken, (which sometimes proved very difficult, and oftentimes impossible) and give at least some sort of satisfaction to the Reader ; by this New Method they may ease themselves of all this Trouble, because you are not oblig'd to conclude any thing at all ; but if Prejudice and Custom should prevail so far as to expect

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expect something like it, because it is a very hard matter to make Men part with every thing at once, tho' never so reasonable; yet you may easily so manage the Matter as to preserve your own Reputation, and at the same time satisfy them. For if they must needs have a Conclusion, 'tis no hard matter to make one, tho' there is no manner of necessity that you should give your self the trouble to deduce it from the Premises.

There is this further Advantage in it, that write what you will, you are scarce in danger of ever being answer'd by any Person that hath any thing else to do, (and you need not fear those that have not) because you may so entangle all you say, that if there should by chance be any thing in it, it shall not be worth any Man's while to find it out.

*Had this Art been known some Ages since, 'tis very probable, that Multitudes of Books, otherwise abounding with Wit and good Sense, which have suffer'd by hard Fate, and been doom'd to more servile Offices than ever they were originally design'd for, might at this very Day have
been*

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been read with Delight, and never been out of the Hands of the Ingenious. But since what was deny'd to our Ancestors was reserv'd for us, we of all People in the World have the least Reason to complain. For my own Part, I was so mightily taken with it at first sight that I could not help trying to imitate it. I am very sensible, how short my Copy comes of the Original: But it cannot be reasonably expected, that every Man that can Dawb a Sign-Post should be equal to a Titian or a Vandike.

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AN IMITATION

OF
Mr. *Asgill's* New Way of
WRITING.

NOW the next Thing that I
would go about, should be
Writing, if I knew where to
begin.

But 'tis no great Matter.
The *Jews* write Backwards.
The *Europeans* Forwards.
The *Chinese* Downwards.

B

The

The Ancients (as I am inform'd) had a way of writing Books that were to be read from the Beginning to the End.

But if I should chuse rather to write one that should be read from the End to the Beginning, I know no Act of Parliament to the contrary.

Wherefore waving the Manner or Matter of Writing, which I suppose no body cares for:

It is most certain, that a Man that is guilty of no Fault stands in need of no Excuse.

No Man ever yet reckon'd himself an Heretick.

Any more than Pontius Pilate ever dreamt of being made a Gentleman.

And yet it seems he is now call'd Mr. Pilate.

But if Mr. Pilate should have thought fit (provided they had

had been near enough) to
have broken a certain Gentle-
Gentleman's Bones that shall
be nameless :

How then ?

Why then 'tis reasonably to be sup-
pos'd, that the next time they had met
he would not have put off his Hat to
him, nor given him the Title of a Gen-
tleman ; and so Mr. *Pilate* must of ne-
cessity have fail'd of that Respect when
alive, which is now paid to his Memory
since his Decease.

But leaving Mr. *Pilate* to pocket this
Affront as he thinks fit ; would he
think it fair to be reproach'd because
Mr. *Pilate* had injur'd him ?

I believe not.

Then He has treated the Memory of
Jesus Christ (whom he scornfully calls
his Saviour) with less respect than is
due to every Man.

Which is beneath a Gentleman.

B 2

Now

Now if any Man should be so prejudic'd, as to think it worth his while to break his Neck down Stairs, he would (if a Man of Breeding) excuse me if I did not follow his Example.

And for the same Reason, if I should think the Christian Religion necessary to be believ'd in order to my Happiness in a Future State; he could not blame me if I would not be damn'd for the sake of *His Company*.

Because there are enough ready to go along with him.

'Tis pity there are so many.
Not that we want them here.

But if a Man has any Company at all 'tis most certain that he is not alone.

Now no Two Persons ever went a Step together, but it was either by Chance, Consent, or Necessity.

And a Man cannot be damn'd by Chance or Necessity.

Consequently by Consent.

I mean by that, the doing something which he should not do, since our Dictionaries have not explain'd it.

And if they had, 'tis much to be question'd whether or no it would have been understood.

And if it had not been understood, it might as well have never been said at all.

For, I believe, that it may be made out from Reason and Scripture, that Language was made to be understood.

But if any Author, either through Weakness or Affectation, should happen to make a wrong use of it :

Why then the Reader is in the Dark.

Nay, altogether in as bad a Condition as that Corporation, which a certain Old Gentleman left a Box of Red-Herrings to as a Legacy.

Because

Because he was resolv'd to leave them something that should make them drink.

Whether they drank or not, is not so material : 'Tis most certain they had a Right to the Herrings.

Mr. Mayor, as is commonly reported, eat the First.

But whether with Mustard or not, is uncertain.

Now leaving his Worship to eat his Red-Herring as he in his Wisdom should think fit, (which does not much belong to us) it does not follow that he did it in imitation of the Apostles broyl-
ing their Fish.

But rather, because it was all that was to be expected from the Deceas'd.

And when a Thing of that Nature is once determin'd, a wise Man will be content to make use of what he can get.

Now

Now most certainly every Man
can get something :

Or else he must cease to be a Man.

Therefore, as I was a saying before,
every Man may get something.

But when I say every Man can get
something, I would not be understood,
as if a Man could always have what he
had most mind to.

But he that is not able to purchase a
Goose may be glad to make a Meal of
the Gibblets.

I am also of Opinion, that a Spoon
is a Spoon, tho' it holds no more than
an Acorn Cup.

But I should very much call that
Gentleman's Conduct in Question, that
should run the Risque of having his
Head broke for giving a Man the Lye
for calling it a Ladle.

Because

Because a Ladle seems to me to be nothing else but a great Spoon.

For the same Reason why may not a Spoon be Consider'd as a Little Ladle ?

So then, they might set their Horses together without quarrelling.
Quod erat Demonstrandum.

TIS Equally True, that if an Old doating Widower should be Fool enough to Marry a Young Wench, the former Brood might (with the Assistance of an Arch-Lawyer) have their Noses put quite out of Joynt.

And if they should go to Law to redress themselves,

They might possibly go away worse than they came.

Not That I speak to Asperse the Gentlemen of that Profession, of which (to borrow

borrow the Words of a Learned Author)

I have both Friends and Relations.

But because when a Sheep runs to a Hedge for shelter, tho' she may come away her self, she generally leaves some part of her Fleece behind her.

And how can she help it?

No more than any one could prevent a Man's Faggotting up a Heretick and an Atheist together.

But 'tis true, you might be something Arch upon him for his Blunder, because you know two Sticks are never call'd a Faggot.

Now, to call a New Cause; I am inform'd that some Persons are wonderfully offended, at St. Paul's going to Prison.

I assure them he did not go of his own accord.

And if he was forc'd thither, it may
be an honest Man's Case as well as any
Bodies else.

I know what he went for too.

But I am not oblig'd to tell it.

Because every Body else knows it
as well as I.

Or if they do not, it is their own

Paul:

And 'tis Impertinence in any one to

ask a Man that is busy, what is a Clock,

when he is himself looking upon a Dial

that all People allow to go right.

Which tho' it be Truth; Yet, *This is*

the Mischief of it, says my Author, That

we are all of us apt (too soon) to think

Our selves either too Young or too Old, too

Wise or too Busy, too Good or too Great (or

too something or other) to learn it.

Now is humbly conceiv'd, that when

he says ALL OF US, that he Measures

all of us by himself.

Which,

Which, whoſoever doth, had need be ſecure either of great Abilities or Aſſurance.

For he that preſcribes to Another Man, expects that he ſhould be influenc'd either by his Precept or Example.

Which is an End of the Story.

THUS have I made a ſaint Endeavour to write after this Inimitable Author. I am ſenſible that my poor Performance falls as much ſhort of my Great Pattern, as the Flight of a Bat is beneath that of an Eagle. But I hope I may be excus'd, conſidering what *Helen* ſays in her Epiſtle to *Paris*,

This is the Eſſay of my Unpractis'd Pen.

And tho' I have not the Vanity to think my ſelf Capable of Copying any one of his Perfections, that is no Reason why a Man ſhould not make an Attempt.

Had the Ancients been of that Opinion, no Man must ever have wrote History after *Herodotus*, or have made Heroick Verse after *Homer*. But we find Nevertheless that both have been done in several Ages and Languages, if not with Superior or Equal, yet at least without the Censure even of the Most Judicious. And tho' *Horace* made such a Compliment to *Pindar*, as to say that it was Madness in any Man to pretend to Vye with him: Yet some Criticks are of Opinion, that no Author Ever took more pains to do it than himself; or could have attempted it with better Success. But let the Success be what it will, the Endeavours of the Learned, or those that intend to be so, ought not to be discouraged: Because it often happens, that a Plant seemingly unthrifty at first, grows up to be a very good Tree.

Now give me Leave to pay my Acknowledgment to this Illustrious Author, who has oblig'd the Understanding Part of Mankind with such an Important Discovery. For I can see no manner of Reason

Reason why a Man may not be allow'd
 as well to write an *Encomium* upon his
 Friend when Alive, as his *Epitaph* when
 Dead. Tho' I confess there is this dif-
 ference; that the Modesty of the Per-
 son may make him take ill, what his
 Friend design'd him as a Piece of Re-
 spect; yet methinks there is no Rea-
 son why a Man should Suffer for his
 Virtue; and Therefore, Gentlemen,
 with your Favour, let me who (as
 a Part of the Christian World) am so
 singularly oblig'd by this Eminent Au-
 thor, have leave to Do an Act of Re-
 spect, in which Justice and Gratitude are
 Equally concern'd.

Religion formerly attack'd in vain,
 Stabb'd to the Heart by thy Victori-
 ous Pen,

Lies Bleeding: Thou mean while Il-
 lustrious ridest

Triumphant Over Faith and Reason
 Both.

What Fam'd *Lucretius* enterpriz'd of
 Old,

By

By which he purchas'd undeserv'd Ap-
plause,

Thou leav'st behind; Nor was it
worth thy while.

Fallse Deities, Notions, and Opinions
vain,

Made Conquest easy: Thou assault'st
the True.

Nor will thy Vast, Heroick, Noble Soul

Think any thing on Earth an Equal
Match;

Or Combat but Omnipotence alone.

I do not in the least question, but I
have by this time sufficiently convinc'd
every Reader that has any regard to Re-
ligion, how easy a Matter it is to play
the Fool. I mean, how to pervert all the
Ends of Language, and turn Every thing,
both Sacred and Civil, into a Jest. It
were to be wish'd, that it were Equally
in Our Power to persuade the rest of
Mankind not to be so fool'd withal.
The Cause of the Disadvantage we la-
bour under in this respect, arises partly
from

from meer Ignorance in some; partly from the well-meant Rigor of others, who think any thing that hath the least shadow of Wit, altogether inconsistent with the Gravity of the Christian Religion; how necessary soever for its Defence. An Adversary doth not much care which Weapon he beats you with; and will most certainly have the Advantage, if there be any one which you either refuse to make use of, or do not understand. Thanks be to God, we do not want Arms proper for our Defence; but if we either neglect the Use of them, or suffer them to be hung out of our own reach, like a Rusty Halbert in an Ancient Hall: If we be sometimes insulted, we may blame our selves.

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